

**Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
Section 63.71 Application of	)	Comp. Pol. File No. _____
MTA Communication, LLC d/b/a MTA	)	
Wireless ("MTA Wireless") For	)	
Authority To Discontinue Certain Services	)	
	)	

**SECTION 63.71 APPLICATION**

Pursuant to Sections 63.71 of the Commission's Rules<sup>1</sup> and Section 214(a) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended,<sup>2</sup> MTA Communication, LLC d/b/a MTA Wireless ("MTA Wireless") hereby files this application to discontinue the provision of retail wireless services in its territory in the State of Alaska.<sup>3</sup> In support of this Application, MTA Wireless submits the following:

**I. Information Required by Section 63.71(a)(1)-(4)**

**A. Name and Address of Carrier**

MTA Wireless  
1740 S. Chugach Street  
Palmer, Alaska 99645

For purposes of this Application, the Commission may contact:

Shannon M. Heim  
4000 Wells Fargo Center  
90 South Seventh Street

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<sup>1</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 63.71.

<sup>2</sup> See 47 U.S.C. § 214(a).

<sup>3</sup> As required by Section 63.71(a) of the Commission's Rules, MTA Wireless has notified and submitted a copy of this Application concurrent with this filing to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary of Defense.

Minneapolis, MN 55402  
Telephone: (612) 486-1586  
Email: sheim@dykema.com

**B. Date of Planned Service Discontinuance**

MTA Wireless will discontinue retail wireless service to all customers in its service territory in Alaska on or about August 1, 2017 or upon completion of all necessary federal and state regulatory approvals. As of the filing of this Application, MTA Wireless currently serves only 1,221 customers and that number is rapidly diminishing. MTA Wireless is actively transitioning its remaining wireless Lifeline customers to alternate services and/or carriers as appropriate and requested. Three other wireless carriers currently provide service in the MTA Wireless territory providing ample competitive choices for customers transitioning their service from the MTA Wireless network.

**C. Points of Geographic Areas of Service Affected**

The only customers affected by MTA's discontinuation are retail wireless customers in the Matanuska Susitna Borough in Alaska.

**D. Brief Description of the Types of Service Affected**

MTA Wireless provides wireless communications exchange services on a retail basis. It has also sold Verizon service on a resale basis as its network has aged.

## **II. Brief Description of the Dates and Methods of Notice to All Affected Customers**

Notices were sent to all existing MTA Wireless customers as a standalone letter. A sample letter sent to customers is attached as Exhibit A. The letters were sent on a rotating basis. All customers received a letter. A reminder message will be included in all bills between March 1, 2017 and June 30, 2017 when MTA Wireless expects all customers to be transitioned off the network. A redacted bill with the message is attached as Exhibit B. An autodialer message will also go out to MTA customers. The text of that message is included in Exhibit B.

## **III. Status of Carrier**

MTA Wireless is a wireless CLEC and Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (“ETC”) in Alaska. It petitioned the Regulatory Commission of Alaska for termination of its ETC status.<sup>4</sup> As of filing, MTA Wireless has only 134 remaining Lifeline customers. MTA Wireless expects those customers to be transitioned to an alternate Lifeline ETC shortly.

## **IV. Circumstance of Discontinuance**

MTA Wireless made a business decision to discontinue retail wireless service when the cost of upgrading its aging CDMA network far outstripped MTA Wireless’ potential revenue. Technological and business challenges have made MTA Wireless’ provision of services unsustainable. The technology required in the current market is

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<sup>4</sup> See *In the Matter of MTA Communication, LLC d/b/a MTA Wireless’ Relinquishment of its Eligible Telecommunications Carrier Designation*, Docket No. U-17-005 (Jan. 20, 2017).

advancing at a rapid pace, and MTA Wireless' technology has become out-of-date and must be turned down. MTA Wireless utilizes Code Division Multiple Access ("CDMA"), which was the standard prior to GSM ("Global System for Mobiles") and 3G. Newer networks utilize Long Term Evolution ("LTE"), which has become the global standard in cellular technology while CDMA has become nearly obsolete. Deteriorating CDMA networks pose increasing public safety risks as devices cannot access emergency services in a diminishing amount of geographic areas.

Several factors contributed to MTA Wireless' exit from the market. MTA's CDMA network would require substantial investment to upgrade and maintain. MTA Wireless lost its federal support which made the investment unviable. The federal support was critical to the financial survival of the network. With technological advances making its service inferior and an unsustainable business model, MTA Wireless contracted to sell much of its underlying infrastructure and is actively transitioning its customers to other carriers offering LTE networks.

## **V. Certification**

The certification of Chief Financial Officer Wanda J. Tankersley is attached as Exhibit C. Ms. Tankersley certifies that the statements contained herein are true, complete and correct to the best of her knowledge. All assertions contained herein are made in good faith.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Discontinuation of MTA Wireless' retain service fulfills the public interest. Investing substantial funds in out of date technology is not warranted by the declining

revenues. Alternative wireless carriers offer more robust service on a more dynamic platform. No existing customer of MTA Wireless will go without service options. Therefore, MTA Wireless respectfully requests the Commission grant this Application.

Respectfully submitted on this 20th day, February 2017.

DYKEMA GOSSETT, PLLC  
Attorneys for MTA Wireless

By: /s/ Shannon M. Heim  
Shannon M. Heim  
4000 Wells Fargo Center  
90 South Seventh Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
Telephone: (612) 486-1586  
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Email: sheim@dykema.com

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that the foregoing Section 63.71 Application was served this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2017, by electronic service or by mailing true and correct copies thereof, postage prepaid, to the following persons at the addresses listed below.

Chairman Robert Pickett  
Regulatory Commission of Alaska  
701 West Eighth Avenue, Suite 300  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3469

Office of Governor William Walker  
State of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Secretary of Defense  
Attn: Special Assistant for Telecommunications  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

/s/ Shannon M. Heim  
Shannon M. Heim

**Exhibit A**  
**Notification Letter**



January 3, 2017

Dear Valued Customer:

The purpose of this letter is to give you advance notice that our CDMA wireless network is scheduled to be turned down early this year. At that time, we will no longer be providing MTA Wireless phone service.

The wireless phone industry has been rapidly evolving; many of our roaming partners are also in the process of turning down their CDMA networks. This affects your service as you roam off MTA's network and travel through other markets. While roaming, your MTA Wireless phone may not work, including the ability to call 911. In anticipation of these market changes, we partnered with Verizon to provide our customers with an alternative wireless phone solution.

We are proud to have provided reliable wireless communications for more than two decades. As a valued customer, we are offering up to a \$200.00 device credit\* if you transfer your MTA Wireless phone service to Verizon at an MTA store by February 28, 2017.

Thank you for your business and please feel free to contact us if you have additional questions at 907-694-3211 from Eagle River or 907-745-3211 from Palmer or Wasilla, or toll free at 800-478-3211.

Sincerely,

MTA Customer Service

\*Terms & Conditions Apply



## **Exhibit B**

### **Language to be added to bills as of March 1, 2017:**

MTA Wireless will discontinue mobile service effective June 30, 2017. MTA Wireless gave notice to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska and the Federal Communications Commission. You may offer comment to the FCC at: <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/> (Docket Comp. Pol. File No. \_\_\_\_).

### **Autodialer Message:**

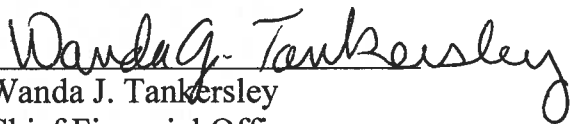
This is an important message from MTA regarding your Lifeline Wireless phone. The MTA Wireless phone network will be turned down in the near future and wireless phone service will no longer be offered. Please call 745-3211 today to learn about other lifeline benefit options that are available to you. Thank you for being a valued MTA customer and we look forward to hearing from you.

**Exhibit C**

**CERTIFICATION OF WANDA J. TANKERSLEY**

I, Wanda, J. Tankersley, certify that the statements contained herein are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. All assertions contained herein are made in good faith.

Dated: February 20, 2017

  
Wanda J. Tankersley  
Chief Financial Officer  
MTA Communications LLC d/b/a MTA Wireless